DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 004 CE 047 963

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TITLE Predictors of Ohio Cooperative Extension Service County Agents' Intentions To Leave the Job. Summary of Research 47.
INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. Dept. of Agricultural Education.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Change; *Employer Employee Relationship; *Employment Experience; Employment Practices; *Extension Agents; *Job Performance; *Job Satisfaction; Need Gratification; Work Environment
IDENTIFIERS *Cooperative Extension Service; Ohio

ABSTRACT

A study sought to determine what factors influenced Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents to leave their jobs (particularly the factor of job performance level) as measured by supervisory rating and self-rating techniques. Additionally, the study sought to determine relationships between variables and to determine the levels of those variables as they existed in the population being studied. All 244 Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents under contract March 1, 1985, were surveyed via a mailed questionnaire, with additional data supplied through an investigation of their personnel files. A variety of relationships among factors were found. Overall, the study concluded that Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents generally had low intentions of leaving their present jobs. They experienced moderate amounts of overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision and the work itself, high satisfaction with co-workers, and fairly low amounts of satisfaction with promotion and pay. They perceived themselves to be high performers, and their supervisors generally agreed. Agents tended to reward themselves intrinsically for good performance, but they did not see that the rewards given them by the organization were necessarily contingent upon their performance level. Lower performers had higher intentions of leaving the job than did higher performers, and the self-rating of job performance was more closely associated with intention to leave the job than was supervisor rating of job performance. Other predictors of intention to leave the job were overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with co-workers, and age. Recommendations were made for improving job satisfaction through feedback, promotion policies, creating cooperative teams of co-workers, and other methods. (KC)

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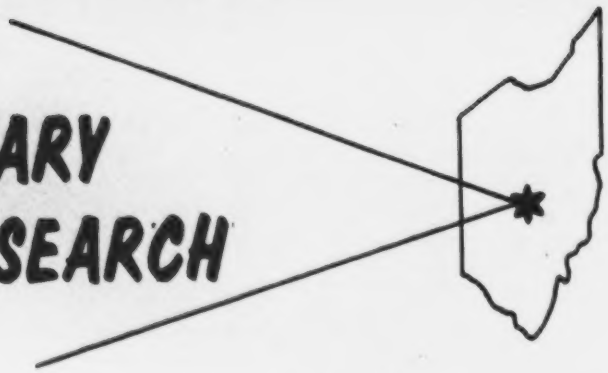

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

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PREDICTORS OF OHIO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE COUNTY AGENTS' INTENTIONS TO LEAVE THE JOB

Emma Lou Van Tilburg and Larry E. Miller

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INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Extension Service is a unique organization whose mission has been to extend lifelong learning and continuing growth opportunities to each member of the community served. Established by the United States Congress in 1914, the Extension Service has been an integral part of the Land-Grant institution network that also included the university campus and research station components.

Extension serves a diverse set of publics in developing a variety of individual skills that encourage personal growth through experiences, aid in attainment and refinement of problem solving skills, and provide the acquisition of new information to be used in life-enriching activities. Traditional subject matter areas addressed by Extension educational programs have included: agriculture, home economics, 4-H youth, and community and natural resource development (Prawl, Medlin & Gross, 1984).

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PREDICTORS OF OHIO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE COUNTY AGENTS' INTENTIONS TO LEAVE THE JOB

Lawrence et al. suggested that the success of the Extension Service as an informal educational system and one of its greatest strengths has come from the involvement of people working with people in each step of the learning process. This was best accomplished when the staff offering leadership to community residents has been a well-trained, people-oriented group (1974).

In essence, the most valuable resource that Extension possesses has been its field staff. These individuals have encouraged and involved clientele at the grassroots level. In Ohio, the field staff has been comprised of county and district personnel including county agents, county extension associates (formerly assistant agents), program assistants and district specialists (Cunningham, 1985).

Because of the complexity of each of the county positions, the recruitment of the most qualified individuals available has been extremely important, and the maintenance of the staff through personnel development activities and an appropriate, equitable reward system has been imperative. The better the Extension Service has performed these two management tasks, the more continuity Extension programming should have possessed at the county, district and state levels (Smith, 1985).

As in any organization, the Extension Service personnel management concerns have taken precedence when staffing patterns have become dysfunctional for the organization (Cunningham, 1985). Especially in the case of an educational service organization like Extension, where the bulk of the organization production system has become concentrated in local staff, management has become extremely concerned when unanticipated staffing changes produced an ineffective system. One of the most severe changes has been when individuals quit. This type of voluntary withdrawal has been most commonly called voluntary turnover (Mobley, 1982b).

When a county staff member quits, both the organization and individual may suffer (Clark, 1981). The disruption of service to clientele, the extra time and money that management spends on recruitment and training of the replacement and the added stress of more work for the remaining staff during the interim are just three consequences suffered by the organization when turnover occurs (Mobley, 1982b).

From the perspective of the individual, leaving a job may have caused temporary loss of income and benefits. The family of the employee may have experienced financial difficulties and emotional strain if the result of quitting was unemployment and/or relocation. The individual may have also experienced psychological problems due to the turmoil of the withdrawal process. These negative effects could have indicated that a particular case of turnover was dysfunctional to the organization and also to the individual (Mobley, 1982b).

However, this dysfunctional situation may not always have been the case. Some researchers have suggested that turnover could also have been a functional phenomenon (Dalton & Todor, 1979; Dalton, Todor & Krackhardt,

1982; Muchinsky & Tuttle, 1979; Staw, 1980). The most obvious situation where turnover should have been functional for the organization has been when the low performer leaves the organization. The negative effects of turnover could have been outweighed by the positive ones if the low performer was replaced by a high performer. This will have certainly benefited the organization, and the individual who left may have been better served and more successful in an alternative setting as well (Mobley, 1982b).

Thus, turnover can have potential benefits for the organization and for the individual. Mobley (1982a, 1982b) contended that when low performers leave, an organization may have experienced the infusion of new information and knowledge, changes in policies may have occurred, flexibility of structure and mobility of remaining employees increased, and withdrawal behaviors decreased.

These consequences were certainly not necessarily contingent upon a low performer leaving, but most often were associated with that particular case. Positive consequences of turnover to the leaver included a possible better fit between the individual and the new job, new stimulation within a new environment, increased and enhanced self-concept, personal growth, probably less stress, more appropriate use of skills, and a potential for career advancement. These benefits may be incurred whether the leaver was a high or low performer (Mobley, 1982b).

Traditionally, literature has stressed the negative aspects of turnover rather than highlighting the positive ones (Dalton & Todor, 1979). And, indeed, organizations experiencing voluntary turnover of valued employees suffered great financial costs, inconvenience, and interruption of service. Individuals leaving may have incurred financial difficulties and psychological distress, but most often experienced some very real positive consequences as well (Mobley, 1982a, 1982b).

The organization needs to understand the phenomena associated with the withdrawal process and the antecedents to all types of turnover. This understanding could provide information to help explain how and why turnover occurred in an attempt to better predict when turnover will occur and for whom. The organization could then use this information to intercede in the withdrawal process or to have speed it up, if desired.

The Ohio Cooperative Extension Service would have benefited from a better understanding of turnover and the individual processes involved as well as to have been able to have determined how the process of turnover may have been different for various levels of performers. For, as valued employees left the Extension Service and less productive individuals remained, the quality, richness, depth, and diversity of educational programs may have greatly suffered (Smith, 1985).

Voluntary turnover of county extension agents in Ohio has caused vacancies that, in some cases, have not been filled because of reduced budgets and/or lack of qualified personnel (Clark, 1981). Even when it has been

possible to fill a vacancy, the process has been very time consuming and expensive. Managerial time involved in recruitment, screening, selection, classification, and training represented a substantial investment. Other costs associated with replacement have all been magnified when a highly valued employee was being replaced (Cascio, 1982).

In Ohio, during the 1979 through 1984 time period, 65 county agents voluntarily left their positions. These were employees who were not encouraged to leave because of poor performance or who retired. Out of this number, 29 were classified as high performers, 29 were classified as low performers, and seven were not classified (Cunningham, 1985). These numbers pointed to the need for research investigating the reasons for turnover and how these reasons might have differed among levels of performers. Extension cannot afford to continually lose employees categorized as high performers any more than it can afford to have kept performers with low ratings. The fact that nearly 50 percent of the leavers during the past six years were high performers clearly presented a case for the need for research dealing with turnover and performance level (Cunningham, 1985).

In an attempt to understand the phenomenon of employee turnover, many models of individual turnover have been developed and empirically tested. Early research indicated that turnover appeared to be an individual choice based on two main factors: perceived desirability of movement from a job (most often measured in terms of job satisfaction) and perceived ease of movement from a job (most often referred to as job alternatives and the attractiveness and attainability of those alternatives) (March & Simon, 1958). Other factors investigated that have appeared to be associated with turnover included age, tenure in the job, environmental factors, and economic trends.

Much of the literature on turnover has been based on the original March and Simon Two Factor Theory of Turnover (Mobley, 1977; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979; Price, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981). However, in response to the continued demand to investigate turnover as it occurred in different populations of performers, the most recent turnover research has attempted to include job performance and related factors in the investigation of turnover (Dreher, 1982; Jackofsky, 1984; Jackofsky & Peters, 1983a; Keller, 1984; Martin, Price & Mueller, 1981). One recent model (Jackofsky, 1984) addressed job performance level as an important independent variable. It (Figure 1.) served as a basis for the development of the theory and model for this study.

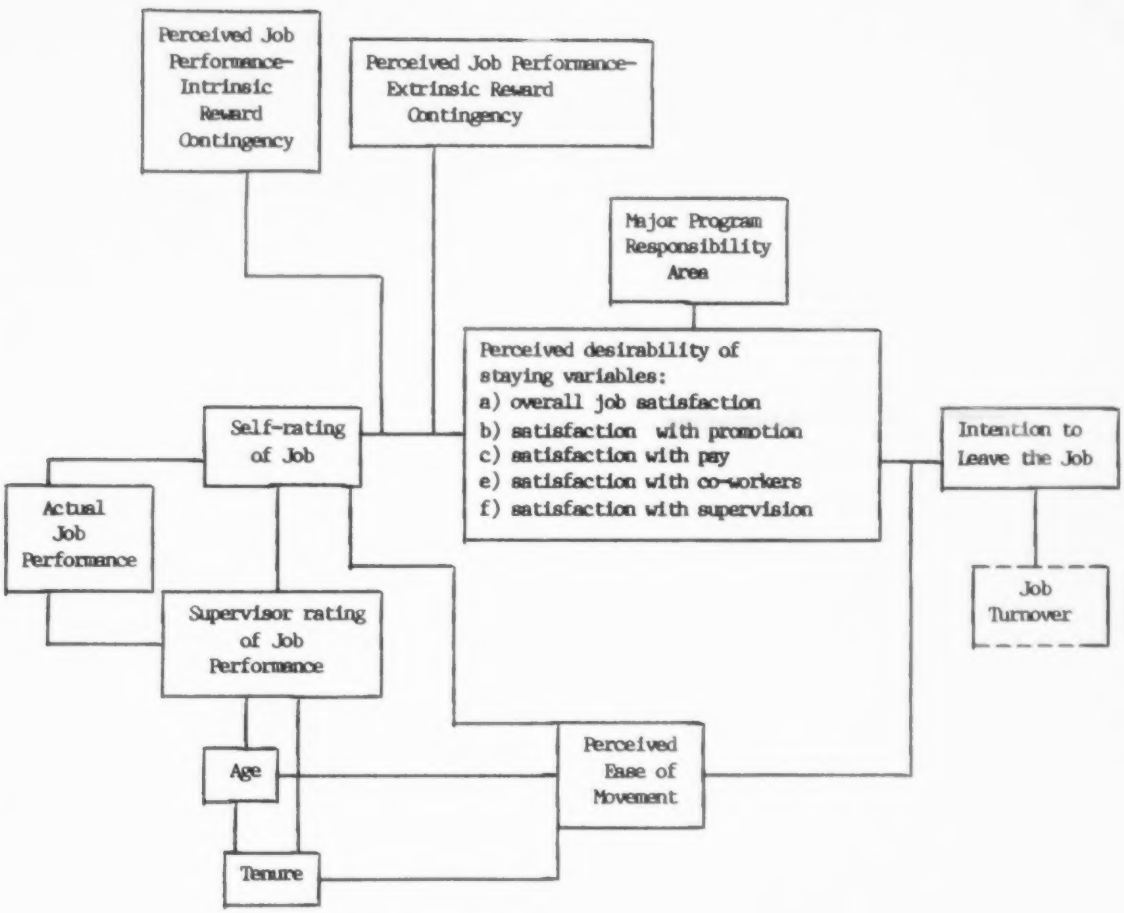

Figure 1. Proposed model of intention to leave the job.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the role that various factors played in the formation of intentions of Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents to leave the job, particularly the factor, job performance level as measured by supervisor rating and self-rating techniques. Additionally, the study sought to determine relationships between variables and to determine the levels of those variables as they existed in the population being studied.

The independent variables of interest were categorized into five groupings: (1) perceived desirability of staying variables (overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with the work itself, satisfaction with co-workers, and satisfaction with supervision); (2) perceived ease of movement; (3) perceived job performance variables (supervisor rating of job performance, self-rating of job performance); (4) perceived job performance-reward contingency variables (perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency, perceived job performance-intrinsic reward contingency); (5) demographic variables (age, tenure in the job, major program responsibility area). The dependent variable was intention to leave the job, a measure that had been suggested to be the immediate precursor to and best predictor of voluntary turnover (Mobley, Griffeth, Hand & Meglino, 1979; Miller, Katerberg & Hulin, 1979).

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe the levels of the independent and dependent variables among Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents.

2. Determine the best predictor(s) of the dependent variable, intention to leave the job.

3. Determine the nature and strength of various relationships between independent variables and between selected independent variables and the dependent variable.

Research hypotheses were developed to address objective #3.

1. The perceived desirability of staying variables (overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with the work itself, satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotion, and satisfaction with supervision) will be negatively related to the intention to leave the job.

2. Perceived ease of movement will be positively related to the intention to leave the job.

3. Perceived ease of movement will moderate the relationship between the perceived desirability of staying variables and the intention to leave the job.

4. Age will be negatively related to the intention to leave the job.

5. Tenure will be negatively related to the intention to leave the job.

6. The perceived desirability of staying variables will be positively related to age.

7. The perceived desirability of staying variables will be positively related to tenure in the job.

8. Perceived ease of movement will be negatively related to age.

9. Perceived ease of movement will be negatively related to tenure in the job.

10. Self-rating of job performance will be positively related to perceived ease of movement.

11. Supervisor rating of job performance will be positively related to tenure in the job.

12. Supervisor rating of job performance will be positively related to age.

13. Self-rating of job performance will be positively related to supervisor rating of job performance.

14. Program responsibility area will be related to perceived desirability of staying variables.

15. Perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency will moderate the relationship between self-rating of job performance and perceived desirability of staying variables.

16. Perceived job performance-intrinsic reward contingency will moderate the relationship between self-rating of job performance and perceived desirability of staying variables.

PROCEDURES

Research Design

The research design was correlational, allowing the researcher to determine the nature and strength of relationships between variables.

Population

The population consisted of all Ohio Cooperative Extension Service

county agents under contract March 1, 1985, obtained from a validated list secured from the business office of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service. The validation process controlled for selection and frame error. The population included agriculture agents (N=94), home economics agents (N=80), and 4-H youth agents (N=70). Community and natural resource development agents (N=2) were included with the agriculture agent population. Total population for the study was 244. The entire population was used in all populations of Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents who might have been employed by the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service as county agents at other points in time. This logic permitted the use of inferential statistics in the data analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

Two methods of data collection were used. The bulk of the data were collected using a mail questionnaire. Additional data were collected through an investigation of the personnel files of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service.

Data were collected during the month of May, 1985. The target population and accessible population were 244 Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents. Total number of respondents was 229 for an accepting sample of 94 percent. Data for 218 agents were usable for a data sample of 89 percent. The data sample included 84 agriculture agents, 71 home economics agents and 63 4-H youth agents. Generalizability of the results of the study was determined by comparing early respondents with late respondents on selected variables (Alpha=.05) using t-tests. No differences were found; thus, using the logic presented by Miller & Smith (1983) (that nonrespondents are most like late respondents) results could be generalized to the entire population, not just to the respondents.

Instrumentation

Data for all variables except supervisor rating of job performance were obtained by a mail questionnaire developed by the researcher. Supervisor rating of job performance was measured using the 1984 Performance Against Standards score obtained from personnel files of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service. Scores between districts were standardized to control for differences between raters.

The mail questionnaire contained three sections:

1. Part One - Likert-type items measuring self-rating of job performance, perceived job performance-reward contingency variables, overall job satisfaction (a perceived desirability of staying variable), perceived ease of movement, and intention to leave the job.

2. Part Two - items measuring demographic variables.

3. Part Three - The Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969) - a commercial instrument using a checklist to measure five facets of job satisfaction (included in the perceived desirability of staying variable category).

Content validity was determined using a panel of experts. (The panel consisted of content and measurement experts who reviewed the instrument. The suggestions made were implemented and the instrument revised.) The instrument was then pilot-tested using Ohio Cooperative Extension Service district personnel to determine the reliability of the instrument. Measures of internal consistency were determined using Cronbach's alphas. Alphas from the pilot test ranged from .70 to .94. Alphas calculated using data from the study ranged from .76 to .92. The Job Descriptive Index reported reliabilities consistently in the .80 to .90 range using a variety of populations (Smith, et al., 1969).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency and variability) were used to organize and summarize the data. Correlational and regression techniques (multiple regression, moderated regression, stepwise multiple regression and Pearson correlation coefficients) were used to determine the nature and strength of relationships and moderating effects of variables on relationships between other variables. Analysis of variance and t-tests were used to compare groups on selected variables.

RESULTS

Description of Respondents

Variables measured in Part One of the questionnaire were interpreted using the scale represented in Figure 2.

Actual Scale

VSD	SD	D	A	SA	VSA
1	2	3	4	5	6

SCALE USED FOR INTERPRETATIONS OF RESPONSES

VSD	SD	D	A	SA	VSA
(1.00-1.50)	(1.51-2.50)	(2.51-3.50)	(3.51-4.50)	(4.51-5.50)	(5.51-6.00)
D I S A G R E E M E N T				A G R E E M E N T	

Figure 2. Interpretation of scaling procedures.

Data for Objective One appear in Table 1. Ohio Cooperative Extension Service county agents generally had low intentions to leave their present jobs. The mean score was 2.13 (strongly disagree) with ninety-three percent of the scores on the dependent variable falling into the Disagreement categories.

Respondents reported moderate amounts of most of the perceived desirability of staying variables. The mean score for overall job satisfaction fell into the Agree category (4.42) with less than ten percent of the agents falling in the Disagreement categories. Ranking the mean scores for the other perceived desirability of staying variables from low to high produced the following results:

1. satisfaction with promotion (LOWEST)
2. satisfaction with pay
3. satisfaction with the work itself
4. satisfaction with supervision
5. satisfaction with co-workers (HIGHEST)

Perceptions of ease of movement were fairly high with a mean of 4.23 (Agree) for the respondents. Very few agents disagreed that it would be easy to move into another job as indicated by only seven percent falling into Disagreement categories.

Agents tended to intrinsically reward themselves for good performance with 97 percent in Agreement with the job performance-intrinsic reward contingency. A mean score of 4.73 for that variable represented an average of Strongly Agree, one of the highest mean scores obtained in the study. In contrast to that finding, however, was the lack of agreement with the job performance-extrinsic reward contingency. The mean score for that variable (measured by Likert-type items but which, in essence, was answering the question "Am I paid according to my job performance level?") was 3.65. Over 40 percent of all respondents disagreed with the performance-extrinsic reward contingency.

Scores for self-reports of job performance all fell into the Agreement categories except for one individual. The mean score for self-rating of job performance was 4.73 (Strongly Agree) and over 68 percent of the agents Strongly Agreed or Very Strongly Agreed. Supervisor rating of job performance produced an average score of 9.24 on a scale of one to 12 with one being low and 12 being high. Scores ranged from 6.7 (n=1) to 11.4 (n=1). Forty-five percent of the agents received a score of between 9.0 and 10.0.

The average respondent was 40 years old and had remained in the present job for 9.3 years. Respondents were fairly evenly divided among the three program responsibility areas (Agriculture = 38 percent, Home Economics = 33 percent, 4-H Youth = 29 percent).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Scale
Age	218	40.0 years	9.7 years	
Tenure in the Job	218	9.3 years	6.7 years	
Supervisor Rating of Job Performance	218	9.24	.848	1 to 12
Self-rating of Job Performance	218	4.73	.406	1 to 6
Extrinsic Reward Contingency	218	3.65	.733	1 to 6
Intrinsic Reward Contingency	218	4.73	.674	1 to 6
Perceived Ease of Movement	218	4.23	.607	1 to 6
Overall Job Satisfaction	218	4.42	.764	1 to 6
Satisfaction with Promotion	218	10.96	7.18	0 to 27
Satisfaction with Pay	218	15.26	5.40	0 to 27
Satisfaction with the Work Itself	218	39.95	5.70	0 to 54
Satisfaction with Co-workers	218	44.37	9.94	0 to 54
Satisfaction with Supervision	218	41.46	10.72	0 to 54
Intention to Leave the Job	218	2.13	1.02	1 to 6

Prediction

To determine the best predictor(s) of the dependent variable a stepwise multiple regression technique was used. Variables were chosen by the researcher and entered into the regression equation according to the strength of the relationship with the dependent variable. A significance level of .05 was used for entry into and removal from the model.

Table 2 shows the set of best predictors included overall job satisfaction, age, satisfaction with co-workers, and self-rating of job performance. Total variance in the dependent variable accounted for by this set was 29 percent (R^2 = .291). Overall job satisfaction was determined to be the single best predictor accounting for 21 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. A regression model containing all independent variables increased the amount of variance accounted for by only four percent (R^2 = .333).

Table 2

Stepwise Multiple Regression of Intention to Leave the Job

Independent Variables Entered Stepwise in Equation	Multiple R	R^2	R^2 Increment	df	F
Overall Job Satisfaction	.460	.212	.212	(1,216)	*58.07
Age	.484	.235	.023	(1,215)	*6.43
Satisfaction with Co-workers	.515	.265	.030	(1,214)	*8.79
Self-rating of Job Performance	.539	.291	.026	(1,213)	*7.72

*$p < .05$, F_{crit} 3.89

Relationships

For the purpose of describing the magnitude of the relationships between variables, the scale suggested by Davis (1971) was used. Data for objective three appear in Tables 3 through 9.

Relationships Between Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable

Five hypotheses dealt with relationships between independent variables and the dependent variable, intention to leave the job:

> Perceived desirability of staying variables will be negatively related.
>
> Perceived ease of movement will be positively related.

Perceived ease of movement will moderate the perceived desirability of staying and intention to leave the job relationship.

Age will be negatively related.

Tenure in the job will be negatively related.

All perceived desirability of staying variables were found to be negatively related to intention to leave the job (Table 3). Main effects in the prediction of the dependent variable were suggested by the results of regression techniques for each of the perceived desirability of staying variables except satisfaction with promotion (Table 4). The findings were consistent with previous research by Clark (1981), Mobley (1977), Mobley et al. (1979) and others.

Perceived ease of movement was negatively related to intention to leave the job (Table 3). As agents perceived higher ease of movement, their intentions to leave the job decreased. The literature review suggested that the opposite relationship existed. For the population studied, main effects for perceived ease of movement in the regression model using each of the five facets of satisfaction were present, but main effects were not present in the model with overall job satisfaction (Table 4). These main effects indicated that perceived ease of movement played a significant role in the determination of intention to leave the job.

Moderating effects of perceived ease of movement on the relationships between perceived desirability of staying variables and the dependent variable were determined to be present in the cases of overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay (Table 4). The opposite relationship was found for satisfaction with promotion, in that the perceived desirability of staying variable, satisfaction with promotion, moderated the relationship between perceived ease of movement and intention to leave the job.

Significant interactions were indicated by the following: a four percent change in the R^2 for the overall job satisfaction-perceived ease of movement interaction, a two percent change in the R^2 for the satisfaction with promotion-perceived ease of movement interaction, and a two percent change in the R^2 for the satisfaction with pay-perceived ease of movement interaction (Table 4).

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Relationships Between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	1.00													
2	.042	1.00												
3	.35	.113	1.00											
4	.339	-.113	.304	1.00										
5	-.264	-.248	-.295	-.184	1.00									
6	.261	.356	.502	.104	-.460	1.00								
7	-.005	.096	-.035	-.099	.045	.062	1.00							
8	.093	.212	.106	-.111	.040	.232	.464	1.00						
9	-.087	.523	.043	-.024	-.078	.215	.096	.112	1.00					
10	-.108	.542	.045	-.122	-.160	.324	.084	.210	.281	1.00				
11	.104	.355	.297	.050	-.214	.490	.137	.335	.253	.258	1.00			
12	.037	.357	.039	-.067	-.241	.230	.098	.246	.307	.216	.265	1.00		
13	-.049	.482	.140	-.039	-.149	.239	.062	.149	.349	.266	.264	.281	1.00	
14	.286	.233	.047	.036	-.183	.112	.078	.000	.083	.123	.025	-.037	.117	1.00

1 Self rating of job performance
2 Perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency
3 Perceived job performance-intrinsic reward contingency
4 Perceived ease of movement
5 Intention to leave the job
6 Overall job satisfaction
7 Tenure in the job
8 Age
9 Satisfaction with promotion
10 Satisfaction with pay
11 Satisfaction with the work itself
12 Satisfaction with co-workers
13 Ssatisfaction with supervision
14 Supervisor rating of job performance

Table 4

Results of Moderated Regression of the Interaction of Perceived Ease of Movement and Desirability of Staying Variables in the Prediction of Intention to Leave the Job

Independent Variable	Intention to Leave the Job		
	Change in R^2	df	F
Overall Job Satisfaction (A)	.198	(1,215)	55.26*
Perceived Ease of Movement (B)	.012	(1,215)	3.27
Interaction (AxB)	.040	(1,214)	11.73*
Satisfaction with Promotion (C)	.007	(1,215)	1.52
Perceived Ease of Movement (D)	.034	(1,215)	7.71*
Interaction (CxD)	.023	(1,214)	5.34*
Satisfaction with Pay (E)	.034	(1,215)	7.82*
Perceived Ease of Movement (F)	.042	(1,215)	9.66*
Interaction (ExF)	.021	(1,214)	5.02*
Satisfaction with the Work Itself (F)	.046	(1,215)	10.62*
Perceived Ease of Movement (H)	.030	(1,215)	6.98*
Interaction (GxH)	.000	(1,214)	.01
Satisfaction with Co-Workers (I)	.065	(1,215)	15.38*
Perceived Ease of Movement (J)	.040	(1,215)	9.54*
Interaction (IxJ)	.001	(1,214)	.32
Satisfaction with Supervision (K)	.025	(1,215)	5.61*
Perceived Ease of Movement (L)	.036	(1,215)	8.20*
Interaction (KxL)	.008	(1,214)	1.74

*$p < .05$, $F_{crit} 3.89$

As can be seen, these changes in the total variance accounted for by an interaction variable (R^2) in the dependent variable in a model containing a perceived desirability of staying variable and perceived ease of movement, and an interaction variable were very small. Even though they were statistically significant, a question remains as to how practically significant they were. (Magnitude small)

Age and tenure in the job were found to be positively related to the dependent variable, intention to leave the job (Table 3). Again, research supported an opposite relationship for both variables. The findings of this study indicated that as age and tenure in the job increased, so did intention to leave the job.

Relationships Between Various Independent Variables

Eleven hypotheses suggested relationships between various independent variables. The relationships were:

Perceived desirability of staying variables will be:

-positively related to age
-positively related to tenure in the job
-related to major program responsibility area.

Perceived ease of movement will be:

-negatively related to age
-negatively related to tenure in the job
-positively related to self-rating of job performance.

Supervisor rating of job performance will be:

-positively related to age
-positively related to tenure in the job
-positively related to self-rating of job performance.

Perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency will moderate the relationship between self-rating of job performance and perceived desirability of staying variables.

Perceived job performance-intrinsic reward contingency will moderate the relationship between self-rating of job performance and perceived desirability of staying variables.

Both age and tenure in the job were positively related to the perceived desirability of staying variables. The relationships were negligible and low, respectively, with Pearson correlations of .062 for tenure in the job and .232 for age. These small correlations suggested that a slight relationship existed between age and satisfaction and tenure in the job and satisfaction. The older that agents were and the longer that agents had held the job, the more satisfaction they should have experienced.

Literature supported these findings (Clark, 1981; Mobley, 1982b). Because the job of Extension agents is complex and contains many tasks, agents may become more satisfied with the job as they get more experienced on the job and become more at ease with expectations of performance. Older agents tend to have been in the job longer, thus they experienced more satisfaction because of the suggested explanation; a relationship that agreed with Mobley (1982b).

Major program responsibility area was associated with the perceived desirability of staying variables of overall job satisfaction (Table 5), satisfaction with the pay (Table 6) and satisfaction with the work itself (Table 7). 4-H youth agents experienced significantly less satisfaction in all three measurements than did agriculture agents and home economics

Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Variance of Mean Overall Job Satisfaction by Major Program Responsibility Area

	Agriculture (N=84)		Home Economics (N=71)		4-H Youth (N=63)
Mean Score	4.560		4.507		4.142
Standard Deviation	.749		.633		.850
Source	df	SS	MS	F*	p
Between groups	2	7.0400	3.5200	6.3286	.0021
Within groups	215	119.5842	.5562		
Total	217	126.6242			

*p<.05, LSD

agents. This relationship was consistent with findings by Igodan (1984) which suggested that 4-H youth agents experienced more burnout and less job satisfaction than other types of agents.

This finding suggested that because overall job satisfaction was the best predictor of intention to leave the job, the chances were that 4-H youth agents, because of their lower levels of job satisfaction, might be more likely to have intentions to leave the job than other types of agents.

Both age and tenure in the job were found to be negatively related to perceived ease of movement. The older the agents were, and the more time they had in a particular job, the fewer alternatives to the job they perceived. These relationships were very low indicating that there was a negligible relationship between tenure in the job and perceived ease of movement and a low relationship for age and perceived ease of movement.

Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Variance of Mean Satisfaction with Pay by Major Program Responsibility Area

	Agriculture (N=84)		Home Economics (N=71)		4-H Youth (N=63)
Mean Score	15.964		15.760		13.777
Standard Deviation	5.351		5.233		5.452
Source	df	SS	MS	F*	p
Between groups	2	197.8575	98.9287	3.4660	.0330
Within groups	215	6136.7113	28.5428		
Total	217	6334.5688			

*p<.05, LSD

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, and Analysis of Variance of Mean Satisfaction with the Work Itself by Major Program Responsibility Area

	Agriculture (N=84)		Home Economics (N=71)		4-H Youth (N=63)
Mean Score	41.8095		40.098		37.317
Standard Deviation	5.548		4.310		6.303
Source	df	SS	MS	F*	p
Between groups	2	728.6283	364.3141	12.3957	.0000
Within groups	215	6318.9130	29.3903		
Total	217	7047.5413			

*p<.05, LSD

These findings, while not significant, certainly suggested that the nature of the relationships was the same as was suggested through previous research. The possibility existed that the measurement of the strength of the relationship may have been affected by the small amount of variance in the responses on the perceived ease of movement variable.

A moderate positive relationship (r=.34) was found between perceived ease of movement and self-rating of job performance. Agents who rated themselves as high performers tended to have higher perceptions of ease of movement from the job. Literature also supported this relationship.

Jackofsky and Peters (1983b) hypothesized that because individuals saw themselves as high performers, they would believe that they had more choices for alternative jobs.

Neither age nor tenure in the job were related to supervisor rating of job performance. These hypotheses were suggested based on beliefs held about rating styles of supervisors. The conclusion was that supervisor rating of job performance was independent of age of the agent and tenure in the job suggesting a more objective style for performance ratings than was originally theorized.

A low positive relationship was found between measures of job performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient was .29 indicating that about eight percent of the variance in one type of rating of job performance could be accounted for by the relationship with the other rating suggesting that agents were perceiving and rating job performance differently from their supervisors.

The moderating effects of reward contingencies upon relationships between perceived desirability of staying variables and self-rating of job performance were not found (Table 8).

However, for the perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency, moderating effects were found in the regression model containing satisfaction with promotion (Table 8). The interesting finding in this model was that it was not the contingency variable that moderated the relationship but the self-rating of job performance variable that did so. Conclusions suggested that satisfaction with promotion depended upon the interaction between self-rating of job performance and the perceived reward contingency present. High raters experienced an increase in satisfaction with promotion as their perceived reward contingency increased as did low raters (ordinal interaction) but satisfaction did not increase as quickly for the higher raters as it did for low raters.

The same situation occurred for the intrinsic reward contingency (Table 9). Only one regression model contained a significant interaction term. That model containing satisfaction with supervision as the dependent variable contained the interaction between self-rating of job performance and perceived job performance-intrinsic reward contingency but self-rating of job performance was the moderating variable, not the contingency variable.

The interaction was disordinal and suggested that for low raters satisfaction with supervision decreased as perceptions of job performance-intrinsic reward contingency increased. The opposite was true for high raters. This interaction could be explained in terms of how low raters of job performance perceived their supervisors. Individuals who saw themselves as low performers may have tried to intrinsically reward themselves more and may have become less satisfied with supervisors who were associated with extrinsic rewards which the low performers may not have received.

Table 8

Results of Moderated Regression of the Interaction of Job Performance-extrinsic Reward Contingency and Self-rating of Job Performance in the Prediction of Desirability of Staying Variables

Dependent Variable	Self-rating of job performance			Performance-Extrinsic Reward			Interaction		
	Change in R^2	df	F	Change in R^2	df	F	Change in R^2	df	F
overall job satisfaction	.060	(1,215)	*16.10	.119	(1,215)	*31.43	.002	(1,214)	.48
satisfaction with promotion	.012	(1,215)	3.55	.277	(1,215)	*83.03	.040	(1,214)	*12.67
satisfaction with pay	.018	(1,215)	* 5.37	.299	(1,215)	*93.26	.003	(1,214)	1.00
satisfaction with the work itself	.008	(1,215)	1.99	.123	(1,215)	*30.58	.000	(1,214)	.06
satisfaction with co-workers	.001	(1,215)	.12	.127	(1,215)	*31.22	.001	(1,214)	.12
satisfaction with supervision	.005	(1,215)	1.36	.234	(1,215)	*66.00	.000	(1,214)	.08

*$p < .05$, $F_{crit} 3.89$

Table 9

Results of Moderated Regression of the Interaction of Job Performance-Intrinsic Reward Contingency and Self-rating of Job Performance in the Prediction of Desirability of Staying Variables

Dependent Variable	Self-rating of job performance			Performance-Intrinsic Reward			Interaction		
	Change in R^2	df	F	Change in R^2	df	F	Change in R^2	df	F
overall job satisfaction	.008	(1,215)	2.32	.192	(1,215)	*55.66	.007	(1,214)	2.04
satisfaction with promotion	.012	(1,215)	2.58	.006	(1,215)	1.34	.008	(1,214)	1.85
satisfaction with pay	.018	(1,215)	3.86	.008	(1,215)	1.72	.004	(1,214)	.85
satisfaction with the work itself	.000	(1,215)	0.00	.007	(1,215)	*18.26	.006	(1,214	1.42
satisfaction with co-workers	.001	(1,215)	.13	.001	(1,215)	.17	.010	(1,214)	2.13
satisfaction with supervision	.011	(1,215)	2.44	.028	(1,215)	*6.26	.020	(1,214)	*4.62

*$p<.05_{crit}3.89$

Only two models containing the extrinsic reward contingency also contained significant main effects for the self-rating of job performance. They were overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay. All models, however, contained significant main effects for the extrinsic reward contingency. No models containing the intrinsic reward contingency also contained significant main effects for the self-rating of job performance. Three models did contain main effects for the intrinsic reward contingency: overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with the work itself, and satisfaction with supervision.

These findings indicated that self-rating of job performance was not related to job satisfaction except in the case of overall job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay. In both of these models, however, were there also main effects for the perceived job performance-extrinsic reward contingency variable.

The relationship between performance and satisfaction has been in question for years. The supposition was that the relationship would be positive if the individuals perceived rewards to be contingent upon performance. Even though this relationship was not supported by the findings, the appearance of significant relationships between reward contingencies and job satisfaction indicated that satisfaction depended more on perceptions of performance-contingent reward systems than the actual performance. Generally, findings indicated that agents would be more satisfied if they believed that the rewards they received depended on their levels of performance regardless of their perceived level of performance.

CONCLUSIONS

Ohio Cooperative Extension County agents generally had low intentions to leave their present jobs. They experienced moderate amounts of overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision and the work itself; high satisfaction with co-workers; and fairly low amounts of satisfaction with promotion and pay. They perceived themselves to be high performers and generally their supervisors agreed. Perceptions of how easy it would be for them to obtain alternative jobs were positive, overall.

Agents tended to intrinsically reward themselves for good performance but did not see that the rewards given to them by the organization were necessarily contingent upon their levels of performance.

Some significant differences existed between 4-H agents and agriculture agents as well as 4-H agents and home economics agents. 4-H youth agents experienced lower levels of overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with their pay and satisfaction with their work. They also had lower perceptions of the job performance-extrinsic reward contingency than did their co-workers.

Lower performers had higher intentions to leave the job than did higher performers, and the self-rating of job performance was more closely associated with intention to leave the job than was supervisor rating of job performance. In fact, self-rating of job performance was included in the set of best predictors of intention to leave the job.

Other members of the set of best predictors were overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with co-workers, and age. Total variance accounted for by all independent variables was less than 35 percent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When organizations lose good employees, the effects can be devastating. Individuals may want to leave a job for a variety of reasons. This study sought to investigate variables and their possible relationships with the intentions of county agents to leave their jobs.

The findings of this study can be used to aid administrators in decision-making, to help develop guidelines for policy-making, and for the development of personnel maintenance strategies. Findings should also be available for use by county agents, county chairpersons, district supervisors and others interested in the success of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service and others involved with educational organizations similar to the Extension service.

A basic premise for this study was that organizations want and need to keep high performers and should either work to improve low performers or discourage them so they will leave. Managers in any organization must have a basic understanding of the individual choice process involved in the models of turnover on which this study was based. A thorough review of literature was made to develop the understanding needed for the framework of this study.

Based on the findings, conclusions, and implications of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Organizations should make rewards given to employees contingent upon job performance so that higher performers are rewarded more than low performers. Rewards can include pay, promotion, formal recognition, environment changes (new office), and other rewards under the control of the supervisor and organization.

2. Organizations need to be aware of the attitudes, perceptions, and intentions of employees. Levels of job satisfaction, performance perceptions, feelings of fairness of rewards, satisfaction with specific parts of the job, and intentions to behave can all have implications for management policies and awareness of these perceptions is the first step in taking control of the situation.

3. To help manage levels of turnover, job satisfaction should be the first concern of managers and supervisors. Facets of satisfaction, as well as general satisfaction are all important.

4. Satisfaction with the team of co-workers is a very important indicator in turnover intentions of county Extension agents. Administrators and personnel managers should make every effort (through personnel development activities, etc.) to encourage a cooperative, pleasant atmosphere for Extension workers through a team approach.

5. Employees should be aware of organizational perceptions of job performance level and vice versa through the use of a counselling/feedback system included in the performance appraisal system.

6. A serious look should be taken at why 4-H youth agents have lower levels of job satisfaction and also see themselves as not being fairly rewarded for levels of job performance.

7. A thorough examination of promotion and tenure policies should be made to determine why agents are dissatisfied with promotion opportunities.

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Within the Cooperative Extension Service, the county agent has served as the main point of contact for people who seek and use Extension information. The Ohio Cooperative Extension Service has invested significant resources in further developing the expertise of these agents. A better understanding of the intentions of these professional employees about whether they intend to leave the job, and the reasons relating to these intentions would not only be useful to managers within this agency but also of interest to researchers and organizational behavior theorists. Some may find it interesting to review the way this study uses moderated regression, a somewhat unique procedure, to examine the interactive relationships among variables.

This summary is based on a Doctor of Philosophy thesis by Emma Lou Van Tilburg, under the direction of Larry E. Miller. Dr. Van Tilburg is an Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Education and Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, The Ohio State University. Dr. Larry E. Miller is a Professor, Department of Agricultural Education, The Ohio State University. Special appreciation is due to Dr. Charles D. Clark, Extension Specialist, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois; John D. Rohrer, Professor, Agricultural Education, The Ohio State University; and Edgar J. Boone, Assistant Director and Head, Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University for their critical review of this manuscript prior to its publication.

Research has been an important function of the Department of Agricultural Education since it was established in 1917. Research conducted by the Department has generally been in the form of graduate theses, staff studies and funded research. It is the purpose of this series to make useful knowledge from such research available to practitioners in the profession. Individuals desiring additional information on this topic should examine the references cited.

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